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—pure white and about the size of a pigeon's egg—were five in number; two were considerably advanced in incubation, one was pipped and two were infertile. In another nest, found by a friend and authentic, were seven eggs, none so far incubated as to render blowing them difficult, and some infertile. I scarce know what inference to draw from these instances of a large number of eggs, but do not think the bird would raise so large a brood. Also the presence of infertile eggs in these nests where there were large numbers of eggs, seems to contradict the idea that they raise such a large brood. But why did they lay so many eggs? Perhaps some observer has explained, but I have never seen the explanation.

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EDITORS' TABLE.

EDITORS: A. S. PACKARD, JR., AND E. D. COPE.

—— Nomenclature is an essential part of language. Owing to the sense limitations under which we exist, objects must have names. So also must general concepts derived from objects have names. The one essential of naming is, of course, that distinct things shall have distinct names; and the second essential is, that each object or concept shall have but one name. These necessities become more and more urgent, as the number of known objects becomes greater. In order that each object and concept shall have but one name, cultivators of the natural sciences have determined to use that name which was first proposed with such a definition as shall enable them to ascertain the application intended by its author. All subsequent names are thus necessarily rejected as waste, to be forgotten as soon as possible. Moreover, names created for objects or concepts which are not defined, are rejected, as not being really proposed; for a name which is not applied to a stated object or concept, is quite as little nomenclature as an object or concept without a name. A name is, in fact, a short substitute for a definition, and where no definition[1] exists, there can be no name. Thus the rule of priority has become the *modus operandi* of nomenclature, and its only possible law.

Besides this practical necessity, an ethical element enters the question. The good opinion of the world is as much property as money and real estate. In fact, *it is* money and real estate.

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[1] It is evident that definitions must often, in the early stages of a subject, be imperfect. But even a bad definition conforms to the necessary rule.

It is just that every man should be valued at his true worth, and should have the opportunity of securing a just valuation at the hands of his cotemporaries. Mental products are prime elements in this valuation; so are labors undergone, and sacrifices submitted to. Intellectual products are unquestionably property, and he who attempts to pass off the results of other men's labors as his own, is as much a thief as he who picks a pocket, or burglariously enters a house. Now when nomenclature represents original ideas, the two conditions of equity and convenience are fulfilled. From this we draw the conclusion, that it is well for producers of ideas to create nomenclature, and that non-producers should avoid it.

The habit of giving credit to others for their ideas is a concomitant of increased numbers and near contact of producers, like any other evidence of civilization. The habit of justice is maintained by the mutual pressure of interests; and knowledge of each other's work is readily obtained through easy intercommunication. Right is a natural element which develops under agitation, and perishes by neglect. All interests contribute to it. No one desires to be thought to plagiarize; but where credit for the ideas of others is not given, plagiarism may be suspected. Hence in some cases, pride, if not benevolence, will prompt to justice. It is indeed true that the same ideas occur independently to different men in different places. But it will always be difficult in these days of wide and ready distribution, for the later producer to know or show how much he may not have been influenced by his predecessor in the field.

The comparative isolation of some of the centers of scientific production in the United States, and the small number of persons so occupied in many of these localities, renders us especially liable to the faults implied in the above remarks, and this in spite of the fact that, for our population, we hold as a nation, a very respectable position in the world of scientific work and thought. Whether it be from the lack of international competition on this continent or not, national pride does not yet seem to be sufficient to induce many Americans to credit their countrymen with their productions, but will attach them too often to foreign names, or will reproduce them, as though absolutely new. A striking instance of this regardlessness occurs to us in the quadruple nomenclature of the geological formations of the center of this continent. After Dr. Hayden, supplemented by Mr. King, had named and classified the geological horizons of the West, Major Powell, in order to have "a new slate," proceeds to ignore the greater part of this work, and names an extensive series of them over again. Soon after, Mr. King, assuming the rôle of a palæogeographer, names the great inland lakes which successively occupied tracts of our continent. Of course the sediments of these lakes had already received names, which are of necessity applicable to the bodies of water which deposited them. Such use is universal in Europe, and the proposition of the new nomenclature by Mr. King, is scarcely more defensible than the proceedings of Powell. But the conclusion was not yet reached. Professor Marsh coolly putting aside all this work of his predecessors, *re-names the entire series* from the period of the beginning of vertebrate life to the present time. He selects names from characteristic genera of fossils, in itself a good basis of nomenclature, but, in this case, utterly uncalled for.

We may soon look back on this stage of our scientific development as presenting some characteristics of the beginning of the century in Europe. The necessities of progress will doubtless early correct any tendency to neglect or ignore just claims wherever found.

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RECENT LITERATURE.

Zittell's Hand-book of Palæontology.[1]—While the recent death of Professor Schimper was a great loss to science, it must also prove a serious blow to Professor Zittell, who was aided by the learned fossil botanist in the preparation of the botanical portion of his Palæontology. The part before us is much thinner than the first, and although no intimation is given by the publishers, we suppose that this is the last part which will appear from the pen of Professor Schimper, and that some one else will carry on the botanical part of the work.

This second part completes the ferns and Rhizocarpeæ, and contains the account of the Calamarieæ, Lycopodiaceæ, and the Phanerogameæ, including the Cycadeaceæ, the part completing the account of this first order of Cycads. It will thus be seen that the author before his death had elaborated the larger tree-like Cryptogams of the coal period, so that this part is of special interest and value to students, and especially teachers. The account of Calamites and its allies is preceded by a general account of the living Equisetaceæ, and figures with which may be advantageously compared those illustrating the restoration of Calamites; so that we obtain a tolerably clear notion of the appearance of these gigantic fossil horsetails of the coal period. Under the head of Calamocladus, the branches and whorled leaves of the Calamites, originally described under the name of Asterophyllites, are figured and described. Antennularia is next described; then Asterophyllum as restricted by Schimper, and other forms, as well as details of fructification which are doubtfully regarded as parts of different species of Calamites, but allowed to stand under various generic names.

The giant club-mosses, Lepidodendron, Sigillaria, etc., are then

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[1] *Handbuch der Palæontology*, unter mitwirkung von W. Ph. Schimper, herausgegeben von Karl A. Zittell. ii. Band ii. Lieferung. Mit 49 original-holzschnitten. München und Leipzig, 1880. 8vo, pp. 153–232.